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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

24 May 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence  
FROM : William W. Wells  
Deputy Director for Operations  
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Some  
Questions of Modern Defense

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article presents brief, critical comments on a previous article which stated that a goal of modern defense is to disrupt an enemy offensive which is in preparation. Taking issue with that assumption, the author considers the main goal of a defensive operation that of preventing an enemy incursion and supporting a transition to the offensive. The disposition of a defense is discussed briefly and arguments presented on mobile versus positional defense. This article appeared in Issue No. 4 (65) for 1962.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned

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## Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 7 Pages

50X1-HUM

COUNTRY USSR

DATE OF  
INFO. Mid-1962

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## SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Some Questions of Modern Defense

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 4 (65) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The author of this article is Colonel A. Oleynik. This article presents brief, critical comments on a previous article by General-Mayor V. Petrenko which stated that a goal of modern defense is to disrupt an enemy offensive which is in preparation. Taking issue with that assumption, the author considers the main goal of a defensive operation that of preventing an enemy incursion and supporting a transition to the offensive. The disposition of a defense is discussed briefly and arguments presented on mobile versus positional defense.

End of SummaryComment:

After 1962 the SECRET version of Military Thought was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970.

The article to w50X1-HUM: refers, "Some Questions Concerning Modern Defense", was disseminated in the IRONBARK series

TOP SECRET

~~TOP SECRET~~

50X1-HUM

Page 4 of 7 Pages

Some Questions of Modern Defense

by  
Colonel A. Oleynik

In his article\* General-Mayor V. Petrenko correctly disclosed one of the most important trends in the development of defense: the constantly increasing decisiveness of its goals and the decreasing time limits for achieving them. However, the General's assertion that it is now possible to set for defense the goal of disrupting an enemy offensive which is in preparation or has already begun, needs refining.

In our opinion, this goal cannot be achieved in every defensive operation and under all conditions of conducting it. The defending troops will be capable of disrupting an enemy offensive in preparation only when a sufficient number of nuclear weapons are available and when these weapons are employed in a massed manner. But when troops are forced to go over to the defense, as a rule with limited forces at their disposal, this possibility will not exist.

Therefore, for example, in the initial period of a war the goal of an army defensive operation will be to prevent an enemy incursion and to support the deployment and transition to the offensive of the main forces of the front.

The goal of defense by combined-arms large units, as a rule, will be to repulse an offensive by superior enemy forces by inflicting considerable losses on him and holding occupied positions, and also to create favorable conditions for the troops to go over to a decisive offensive.

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\* Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought", No. 6 (61), 1961.

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Page 5 of 7 Pages

In examining the question of increasing the depth and aggressiveness of modern defense, the author, in our opinion, does not entirely correctly assess the nature of defensive actions by troops in the last war. We cannot agree with his assertion that, previously, countermeasures against attacking groupings consisted only of the passive repelling of attacks in order to stabilize the situation. The experience of the Great Patriotic War, specifically, attests to the great aggressiveness of defensive actions by our troops even under very complex conditions. In addition to firmly holding occupied positions in the defense -- which supported its stability and aggressiveness -- decisive counterattacks and counterstrikes and the extensive maneuvering of forces, means and fire frequently were carried out.

Counterattacks by troops in the Battle of Moscow (December 1941), on the approaches to Leningrad (1941), in the defense of Kursk and on the Kiev bridgehead (1943) can serve as examples. In the autumn of 1942 troops of the North Caucasian and Transcaucasian fronts, with a stubborn defense and aggressive actions, routed the enemy assault groupings in the areas of Ordzhonikidze, Groznyy, and Tuapse.

In modern defense the role of mobility has, unquestionably, grown sharply. However, in our opinion, it is still premature to attach decisive importance to it, and to belittle the role of positional defense and transform it into a means of supporting mobility, as the author does. Although positional forms of combat actions have ceased to be the sole predominant ones in a defense, they are no less important than mobility. This applies especially to defense at the tactical level where, in particular, the firm holding of occupied positions by making use of advantageous features of the terrain and its engineer preparation retains its importance. Therefore, in our opinion, modern defense can be properly defined as positional-mobile, closely combining the staunch holding of individual important areas with wide-scale maneuvering of fire and troops.

The author's attempt to show that the nature of combat actions in a defense during a future war will be completely different was not successful, in our opinion. For example, it says in the article that divisions will not be located along one line with varying combat front axes, but that the single

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Page 6 of 7 Pages

continuous army defensive zone, having lost its former symmetry, will have supposedly already been broken down into individual defensive areas and centers. This is the basis for the conclusion as to the discontinuous-strongpoint system of modern defense.

It would seem that we could agree with this. However, such assertions are entirely unsound, in that the "new" defensive disposition will be dependent on time alone. When the front is stabilized for a comparatively long time, the author says, individual defensive areas can be gradually joined together in the end and, in certain sectors of the front, transformed into a single (division or army) continuous defensive zone. The author emphasizes that, naturally, time is needed to do this.

So, what is new here? Even during the Great Patriotic War, the configuration of the defensive line varied and there was not necessarily a single front axis for all large units and even units. This statement is borne out by the defense of Tula in 1941, or on the Kursk Bulge in 1943, where the fronts of some large units faced north, others west, and still others, south.

Previously, defense at first was always discontinuous with strong points, for example: the defense of the 51st Army in 1942, when enemy attempts to break through to our troops, who were surrounded in the area of Stalingrad, were repulsed; the defense of the 2nd Guards Army in 1944 in Shaulyai; and in many other cases. When time was available, the defense was gradually developed and improved; it acquired an increasingly continuous structure and then, when forces and means were properly distributed along the front, was converted into a continuous defensive zone at the division and army levels.

Here, obviously, we must seek another solution to the problem of the disposition of a defense. We feel that strong points will be characteristic of defense regardless of the time available to organize it. The absence of continuous trenches, positions and zones, and the sharp increase in combat capabilities and mobility of troops almost completely negate "classical" defense in its former sense, and increasingly attach a defensive-offensive nature to it with a gradual erasing of the distinctions between troop disposition in defense and offense. Under these conditions, the presence of sizeable gaps between

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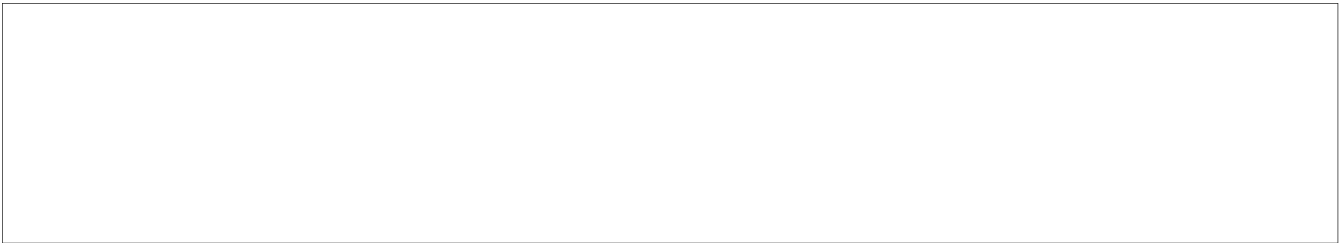


Page 7 of 7 Pages  
50X1-HUM

units and large units, as well as open flanks, sharply increases the role and significance of all-round defense at both the tactical and operational levels, as well as the role of areas of fire destruction being prepared in combination with defensive areas and a system of obstacles.

In connection with the fact that when a defensive operation is conducted there will often be a limited quantity of nuclear weapons available, conventional means of combat -- aviation, artillery, tanks, and small arms -- will find wide employment. In a number of cases the main burden of repulsing an enemy offensive will rest on these means.

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